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Directorate of Intelligence
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CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN

WEEKLY UPDATE

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN WEEKLY UPDATE

5 May 1988

This weekly Situation Report is prepared by the Central America and Nicaragua Branches, Office of African and Latin American Analysis. This paper was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Middle America-Caribbean Division, ALA. [REDACTED]

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CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN
WEEKLY UPDATE
4 May 1988

Perspective: Verification Muddle

Honduras abruptly has reversed its threat to boycott the next Central American Executive Commission meeting, clearing the way for the next session--scheduled for 20 May--to review the tentative agreement to create a verification mechanism. Nevertheless, with two weeks to go, the Central American democracies have made no progress on two agenda topics: guidelines for the three countries selected to give technical assistance in verification and Nicaragua's proposal for a peace and friendship treaty. The democracies also have little inclination to involve themselves in verification aspects of the Sapoa agreement, including a dispute between the two principals charged with verifying the accord--OAS Secretary General Baena Soares and Cardinal Obando--over whether the US unilaterally may furnish humanitarian aid to the Nicaraguan insurgents. []

Honduran officials told the US [] last week that Tegucigalpa was abandoning its tactic of suspending its participation in the peace process until Nicaragua withdraws its World Court suit because of fears of adverse international reaction. The move followed a trip to the Hague and West Germany by Foreign Minister Lopez. The officials say that the policy switch does not indicate an imminent deal with Nicaragua on the court case. We believe it reflects Lopez's failure to gain German agreement to pressure the Sandinistas to drop the case, as well as lack of support from the other Central American democracies. []

The democracies appear to be in no hurry to address verification issues that may hinge on the success of ongoing Nicaraguan cease-fire talks. The three countries which will assist with verification--West Germany, Canada, and Spain--have reiterated to US officials their disinclination to do any serious planning until the Central Americans define their task more precisely. None of the three appears to envisage giving the UN responsibility, although they admit the possibility of some UN involvement such as technical advice. Nicaragua probably will

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push at the Executive Commission meeting for a UN role and President Ortega has already announced that he favors expanding the verification commission itself to include a Latin American and a Nordic country. []

Although the democracies--except Honduras--have ducked the humanitarian aid issue, Nicaragua could raise it at the Executive Commission. The Sandinistas are for the moment reneging on what the anti-Sandinista rebels claim was an informal agreement at Sapoia to allow private carriers to deliver US nonlethal aid. Managua received a boost this week from the OAS Secretary General's letter to Secretary Shultz criticizing the initiation of aid deliveries to rebels inside Honduras and refusing to verify that they did not contain military supplies. Cardinal Obando, anxious that Baena Soares is undercutting his role in verifying compliance, publicly dissassociated himself from the Secretary General's position. He is likely to feel increasingly isolated, however, without expressions of support from outside Nicaragua. []

Democratization

- A May Day march in Managua sponsored by Nicaragua's opposition labor coalition drew 5,000 participants, [] Sandinista toughs disrupted a demonstration of 1,500 people sponsored by another opposition labor group the same day. On 29 April, Sandinista police removed protesting labor unionists from the site of a hunger strike [] The police arrested several labor leaders and blockaded the building. []
- The director of Nicaragua's independent Radio Corporacion was detained on 29 April and repeatedly physically struck by Interior Minister Tomas Borge [] [] Borge criticized the radio station for its broadcasts, including an interview with rebel military chief Enrique Bermudez and a satire of Borge himself. []
- Nicaragua suspended newscasts on 4 May on at least three independent radio stations for eight days, according to the official press. The stations--including Radio Corporacion, Radio Catolica and Radio Mundial--were accused of falsely reporting that a labor activist had been tortured to death by police. On 3 May, the facilities of Radio Mundial were vandalized [] [] The station's owners are accusing the Ministry of Interior of carrying out the attack. []
- Nicaraguan police this week detained a number of activists who have supported protesters on a two-week-old hunger strike, [] On 3 May

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about a dozen labor activists were arrested, and the following day some two dozen opposition leaders were detained. []

- A Nicaraguan opposition lawyer told [] [] that repression in the Matagalpa region has grown rather than diminished since the state of emergency was lifted in January. He said the police routinely sentence individuals involved in opposition activities to six-month incommutable prison terms. []
- Sandinista Directorate member Bayardo Arce indicated that Nicaragua is considering holding municipal elections this November [] Arce told an opposition leader that the Supreme Electoral Council had informed the government that it would need six months to prepare for a vote. Arce added that elections for the Central American Parliament could be held simultaneously if the other Central American countries were ready, as well. []
- The Honduran Congress approved on 27 April the treaty creating a Central American Parliament. A congressional committee has been charged with meeting with regional counterparts to smooth out final details, including a timetable for implementation. []
- The five Central American vice presidents' meeting on 28 April in Costa Rica called for rapid approval of a regional Parliament and requested West Europe and the UN to provide economic aid. The vice presidents also met with a delegation of 12 members of the European Parliament, who according to press reports promised \$20 million to assist in the election and installation of the Central American Parliament. []

Cease-Fire/Amnesty

- Nicaraguan cease-fire talks ended 30 April with only a tentative agreement to meet again on 12-14 May. The rebels refused to extend the current truce an additional 30 days and rejected a Sandinista proposal to have the Red Cross serve as the conduit for humanitarian aid. The rebels claim the Sandinistas are taking a tough line to prolong the talks and starve them into submission, [] The insurgents also refuse to hold the next round in Managua, in part because of the repressive atmosphere there, and will insist on another venue. []
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-- [REDACTED]

-- [REDACTED]

-- The International Red Cross is aware that its survey of Nicaraguan prisons in February did not include state security prisons and clandestine jails, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The organization estimates that 1,000 political prisoners are held in these facilities and now believes that there are as many as 5,000 political prisoners in total. The Red Cross has protested the government's misuse of its February report. [REDACTED]

-- Staff members of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have reviewed nearly all the files of the 1834 Nicaraguan prisoners who are former National Guardsmen, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The staff will recommend to the commission that all but 50 to 100 of these prisoners be released under the amnesty provisions of the Sapoa agreement. [REDACTED]

-- The distinguished citizen member of the Guatemalan National Reconciliation Commission publicly suggested that she would meet with rebel representatives this week

[REDACTED]

-- [REDACTED]

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National Reconciliation

- Members of the Central American National Reconciliation Commissions planned to attend a seminar in Costa Rica on 2-4 May sponsored by the University of Central America. [redacted] neither Nicaraguan Cardinal Obando nor Auxiliary Bishop Vivas will attend. Costa Rican President Arias is scheduled to meet with the participants. [redacted]

International Verification

- OAS Secretary General Baena Soares criticized the US delivery of humanitarian aid to Nicaraguan rebels in Honduras as a violation of the Central American peace plan, according to press. Cardinal Obando said the criticism does not reflect the opinion of the verification commission established in the Sapoa accord, but only Baena Soares's personal view. [redacted]
[redacted] On 29 April, Baena traveled to Colombia to try to enlist Bogota's support of his efforts as a witness to the Sapoa agreement. [redacted]
[redacted]
- Spanish Foreign Ministry officials told the US Embassy on 28 April that Spain has not yet officially accepted the Central American invitation to form part of an international verification commission. Spain wants details on the probable composition of technical teams as well as a sense of the extent of Spain's commitment. Spanish officials are meeting individually with Canada and West Germany and say a three-way meeting will be held next week in Ottawa. [redacted]
- Nicaragua's UN representatives have told West German diplomats that the Central American Executive Commission communique of 7 April provided final authorization for participation in verification by West Germany, Canada, and Spain. [redacted] The Central American democracies, however, have all informed US Embassies that the communique must be ratified at the next meeting on 20 May. West Germany's Foreign Minister has instructed the UN mission to proceed cautiously. [redacted]

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- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Nicaraguan Cardinal Obando outlined his plan for the church's role in verifying compliance with the Sapoa accord on 2 May. Obando proposes to have five-member teams assigned to each of the seven cease-fire zones. Each team will be headed by a bishop. [REDACTED]

Aid to Insurgents

- Costa Rican Minister of the Presidency Arias told US officials that an assistance program for Nicaraguan children and US funding for medical treatment of Nicaraguan combatants in Costa Rica may begin immediately. The question of food deliveries to the anti-Sandinista rebels is still under consideration. [REDACTED]
- US shipments of non-lethal aid to anti-Sandinista insurgents in Honduras increased last week, according to press reports. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] by 27 April over 125 metric tons of food had been distributed, including nine truckloads to troops in the Yamales area. (S NF)

Refugees

- UN officials have published a communique criticizing Honduran military presence around refugee camps for Salvadorans in the wake of a shooting incident at Colomocagua camp. Nevertheless, the statement commended the government for creating a board of inquiry and turning the accused soldier over to a military tribunal for trial. The US Embassy in Tegucigalpa comments that the communique and a letter from the UN High Commissioner to President Azcona tend to reinforce the refugees' claims that they are entitled to extraterritoriality. [REDACTED]

Other Developments

- [REDACTED]
- The Honduran press on 25 April published a military communique accusing Nicaragua of attacking the town of

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[redacted]
Suji, Gracios a Dios department, resulting in two deaths and 17 wounded. [redacted]

[redacted] Nicaraguan Indian insurgents carried out the attack and the Honduran allegations are intended to distract attention focused on Tegucigalpa for allowing aid to reach anti-Sandinista rebels. On 30 April, Managua denied having crossed the border and asked for permission to inspect refugee camps in Honduras because of alleged Nicaragua official harassment of Miskito refugees. [redacted]

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-- Representatives of the five Central American countries have requested a meeting of the UN General Assembly, possibly for May 11, [redacted]

[redacted] A draft resolution does not contain contentious or political language but calls for the Secretary General to establish a mechanism to implement the Special Economic Assistance Plan for the region. The Central American vice presidents have announced that they will attend the session to urge support for the plan. [redacted]